

Chapter VII

Business Health

Wallingford's businesses are community assets and its business districts serve as neighborhood focal points. Team Wallingford envisions a neighborhood where people can work, shop, and conduct business at a variety of places and where businesses can thrive. The Business Health recommendations are based on a survey of all storefront and home businesses and on input from many community meetings.

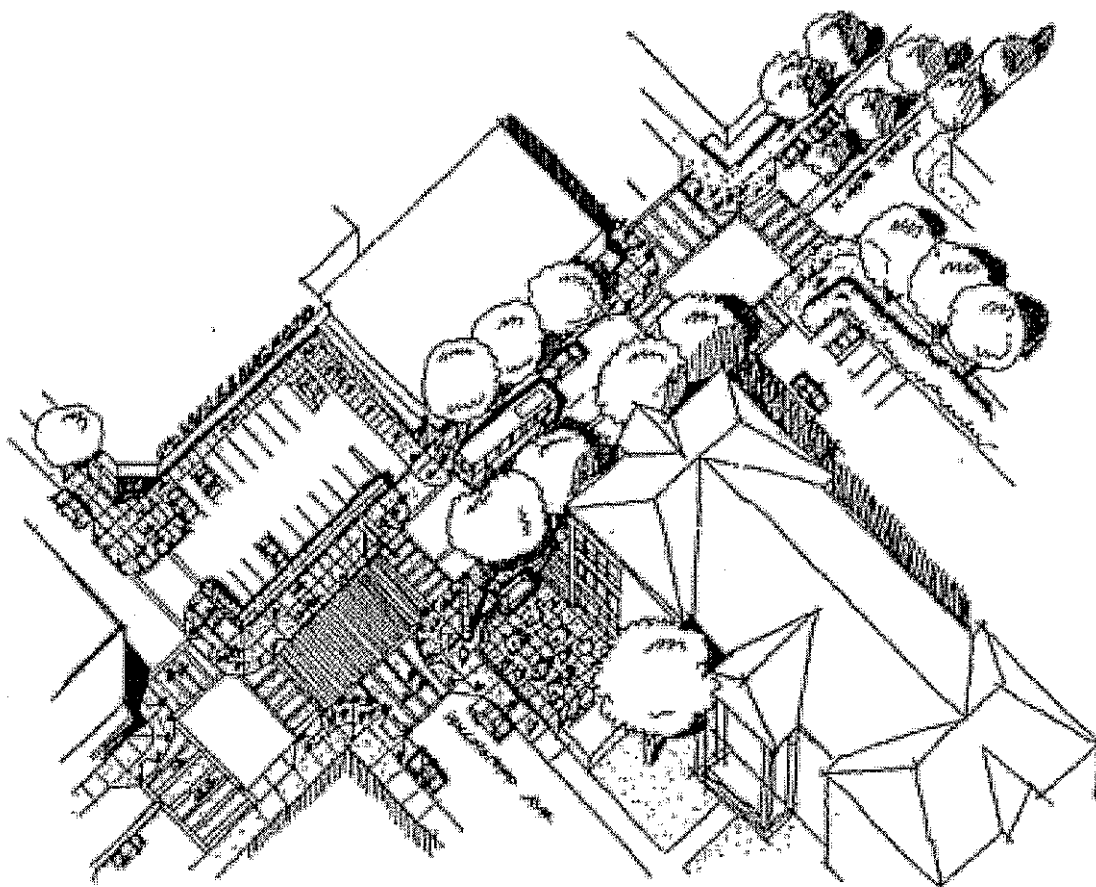


Figure VII-1: Wallingford Place-making *proposal*

Comprehensive Plan Rationale:

The City's Comprehensive Plan envisions healthy small business districts which are the center of community life. In residential urban villages, the services are oriented toward the local population, with some regional businesses appropriate. According to a survey completed by the Business Health Committee, the Wallingford Business district currently receives 32% of its business from the local residential community, and the economy of the local businesses is, in many cases, unexpectedly fragile. National trends, re-enforced by local ones, show that the nature of small business districts is changing as "big box retailers" and luxury shopping malls increasingly narrow the economic base of smaller neighborhoods. Many, like Wallingford, are losing their variety of shopping experience and becoming largely restaurant-oriented convenience districts to serve double-income families with money, but little time. However the Wallingford Business district responds to these trends, it is certain that increased population brought by the Urban Village ideal, and more targeting of the local population will be very important ingredients in enhancing the local

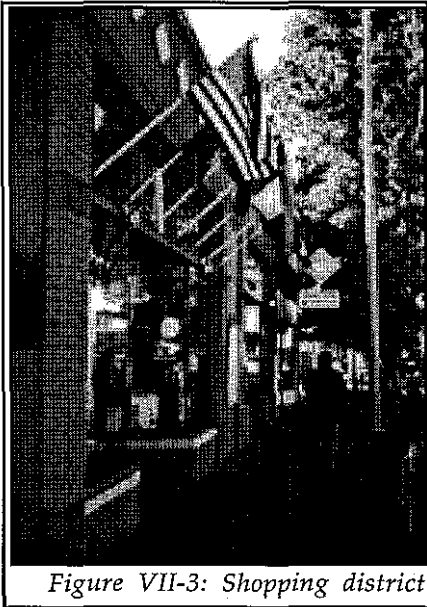


Figure VII-3: Shopping district

The city's zoning suggests that all urban villages shall have continuous storefronts and commercial establishments along lively sidewalks and streetscapes. To achieve these goals in the Wallingford area, the economy of the local business community needs to be improved, and the retail services linked better with the surrounding community. It is also strongly recommended that single-purpose residential developments be discouraged, particularly in the key blocks of the central business core along 45th Street from Wallingford to Sunnyside.

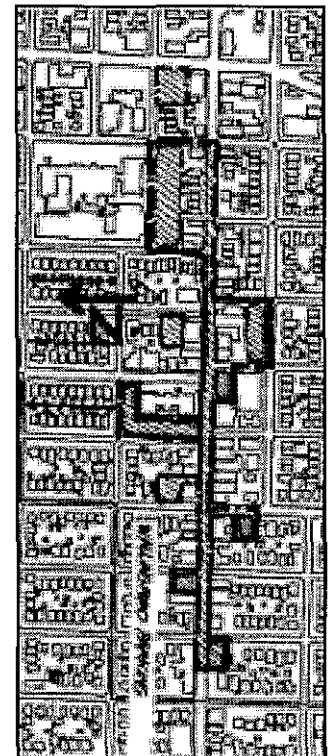


Figure VII-2: Parking supply on N. 45th Street

Complete Business Goals and Policies

BH-1: Improve Customer Access.

Traffic congestion and a lack of parking are seen as the biggest threats to our businesses. To be successful, the Wallingford business district must become a shopping destination attractive to both local and city-wide customers. Access could be improved by immediate actions, including formation of a parking association, and improvements for transit-riders, bicyclists and pedestrians. Over the longer term, satellite parking with shuttle service, a "ride free" bus zone with redemption tokens, or a customer delivery service should be explored.

BH-2: Better Utilize Existing Parking Opportunities.

Current parking space is fragmented, unposted, and not fully used around the clock.

Make better use of existing parking areas. A Wallingford Parking Association is suggested to manage parking, explore a token system to enable parking lot usage area-wide, and make better use of potential parking spaces by setting loading zone hours, for example, or sharing under-used parking lots. The Parking Association should implement an incentive program to increase employee use of buses, bikes and carpools and explore improvement of city efforts to enforce parking ordinances.

BH-3 Keep Business Districts “Clean And Safe”.

Litter, ugly properties, and empty storefronts are seen as emerging trouble spots. The Wallingford business district will explore and implement a Clean and Safe Program that will seek to:

- improve security around businesses (via a "good neighbor" policy, a notification and enforcement process, etc.).
- improve street cleaning.
- maintain a clean sidewalks standard and enforce graffiti removal (with cooperation from business and property owners)
- assure adequate trash cans and prompt trash removal for special events
- engage with landlords to encourage minimum maintenance and improvement of buildings and storefronts.

BH-4 Beautify The Streetscape Along 45th.

The business corridor along 45th needs to be unified and its unique treasures displayed; the street is Wallingford's "living room" and North Seattle's "dining room". A set of concerted actions bridging many subcommittees (See Key Project #1) is a very high priority to strengthen the business climate for retail businesses along 45th. Recommendations include

- Placing "gateways" at each end of 45th to strengthen the sense of place.
- Widening sidewalks at selected locations to promote outdoor dining and other amenities.
- Providing benches, public art, flowers, shrubs and healthy trees to create a charming, intimate feel within our public spaces.



Figure VII-4: Honey Bear Bakery at Meridian & N. 56th

BH-5: Maintain and promote a vital business community.

As a group, the small, independently owned businesses in Wallingford are quite fragile. Creating a business infrastructure and financing strategy is critical to business health.

Proposals:

- Include the Chamber of Commerce with other community organizations in supporting a staffed community office as part of WEaving Wallingford. The office would provide small business assistance, an education program, grant and loan application assistance, linkages to other

business services, and work with landlords to fill empty spaces with desirable additions to the retail community. This would allow the Chamber to function more efficiently as a business organization by

- providing support for small (and micro) businesses,
- building strategic alliances to gain funding and support for various business plans and projects,
- and responding proactively to develop a healthier business district,
- . Hire a professional Marketing Manager for the Wallingford business district who would
 - create a long-range marketing plan and an image campaign, and establish an exciting array of yearly events
 - promote Wallingford's attractiveness for both destination and neighborhood shopping
 - promote business groups, coordinate shared advertising, and capitalize on Wallingford's uniqueness
- Establish a Business Improvement Association (BIA) that would collect money for things necessary to implement the above proposals, including contributing to the cost of maintaining the WEaving Wallingford office, salary for a Marketing Manager, street amenities, and the costs for sidewalk and street cleaning. (see Strategy 1, next pg.)

BH-6: Increase Opportunities For Local Employment And Daytime Jobs,

Strategies for Business Health A Business Action Plan

The Wallingford Chamber of Commerce is a volunteer organization, funded primarily by membership dues. To meet the growing needs of the business community, some key professional services and significant funding will be required. To accomplish the above goals and projects, the following specific strategies are recommended

1. Evaluate And, If Supported, Establish A Business Improvement Association. (seeBH-5)

1.1 Request city funds to hire a professional business expert to establish the BIA (\$50,000)

Semites to be included in the BIA are:

- Help fund WEaving Wallingford office which would assist with such activities as outreach and education activities, fundraising, advertising, special event planning, and parking association management
- . Sidewalk cleaning and graffiti removal
- . Sidewalk amenities such as benches, art, flowers
- . Customer delivery service to allow shoppers to walk to/from home
- . Shuttle service from satellite parking lots (future)

The physical boundaries and allocation formulas for the BIA will be established during the design stage.

1.2 Explore a related residential funding component.

Residents give the quality of the business district a high priority, therefore, given the fragile state of many local businesses, residents might be ideal partners in funding and maintaining business district improvements.

2. Create a “Clean and Safe” Program

Planning surveys have shown that attractiveness and safety of the business area are major areas of concern. An ongoing “Clean and Safe” program would provide focus and continuity for addressing this important issue. The program would be directed by the Chamber of Commerce, with a significant business and residential volunteer component.

2.1 *What we need from the city:*

- median refuges, crosswalks, curb bulbs, and safety signals
- adequate trash cans and removal after events
- prompt graffiti removal
- enforcement of relevant ordinances
- improved street cleaning

2.2 *What we need from the business community, with city support:*

- motivate landlords to maintain and improve buildings
- local graffiti removal
- creation of a “good neighbor” policy, with effective enforcement and encouragement

3. Enhance Wallingford Mobility (BH-1 and BH-2)

Like every city neighborhood, Wallingford has lots of cars and lots of traffic. Cars bring customers who sustain business health in the Wallingford business district, but if we are to maintain a vital business core, we need to better manage the movement and parking of those cars, and better exploit other means of transportation to our businesses (e.g. bus, bike and foot).

3.1 *What we need from the city:*

- work with METRO to improve bus access to the business core, to develop attractive bus stops, and develop scheduling that meets the needs of local retail and service establishments
- work with METRO to develop a “ride free” zone along business corridors within the neighborhood
- strong enforcement of parking limits, to gain more customer turnover
- enforcement of zoning and building standards to assure new parking spaces

3.2 *What we need from the business community, with city support*

- a Parking Association (via the BIA) to manage scarce parking resources
- bike storage sheds and sidewalk units - with a distinctive Wallingford “look” or color
- customer delivery service to encourage shopping without cars
- shuttle service from satellite parking locations (via the BIA)

While neither the business or residential communities currently favor additional parking lots, the Parking Association and the Chamber of Commerce should be commissioned to monitor the situation with the help of WEaving Wallingford. With continued business

growth, the impact of the RTA, and with some possible city funding options, additional parking may **become more attractive**.

4. Enhance **Wallingford** Amenities (see BH-5)

Surveys show that residents and visitors like Wallingford's charm, variety and scale, but there are also concerns that the business district is aging and starting to look shabby. The business district needs to improve amenities and vitality if it is to continue to attract both local customers and those from all over the city. Wallingford needs to be seen as a wonderful shopping destination.

4.1 What we *need from the city*:

- . collaborative effort to create neighborhood design standards that respect size and style
- . permit as a "cafe" neighborhood, to allow sidewalk dining where possible
- street trees and benches

4.2 *What we need from the business community, with city support*

- improved facades- painting, awnings, sidewalk upkeep
- . art, flowers, greenery (via BIA and matching fund projects)